

REVIEWS 'THE TIMES' and 'SUNDAY TELEGRAPH'

Angelique Rockas
MEDEA.

The Times

Medea

Theatro Technis

At least one of the many indistinguishable "listings magazines" in London called the *Medea* of Euripides *Media* for its presentation at the Theatro Technis. There is a slight accuracy in that, since the director of North London's temple to Greek theatre has tried to expand the tragedy to relate it to Britain's treatment of foreign minorities and his use of slides seems to blame newsprint, along with figures like Ronald Reagan, for that mistreatment. But the spurious issue of relevance so allowed to die and apart from the slides, the play tends to speak for itself.

Not always does it speak for itself as one might expect. The ruler of Athens is distinctly Irish, for instance, which is an intriguing idea against the generally flat British speech of the Corinthians. Modern dress makes

21st Jan. 1982, p.15.

the hero, Jason, a naval captain with a pipe, and the two women who make up the chorus wear pleated skirts. Even in that environment, the real story, the wrath of *Medea* spurned, is encouraged to erupt in the dangerous passions of Angelique Rockas, and extremely threatening tragic heroine.

Yet even that, and the good speaking of the chorus women, only hints at the real power. Nothing laughable happens, which is an achievement of seriousness, but nor does tragedy occur. In New York now, there is a virulent body of opinion that says the twentieth century cannot speak or perform Greek tragedy. It can, but not by mistaking temporary politics for fundamental truth: that would be farce.

Ned Chaillet

24 Jan. 1982, p.12.

Sunday Telegraph

WOMEN'S WORLDS

TWO plays about women rather than women's plays inspire sensitive performances and productions, curiously relating to each other across the centuries. Sylvia Plath's *Three Women* (Old Red Lion), tells of mixed emotions as childbirth approaches. The Theatro Technis version of Euripides' *Medea* forges through to destruction.

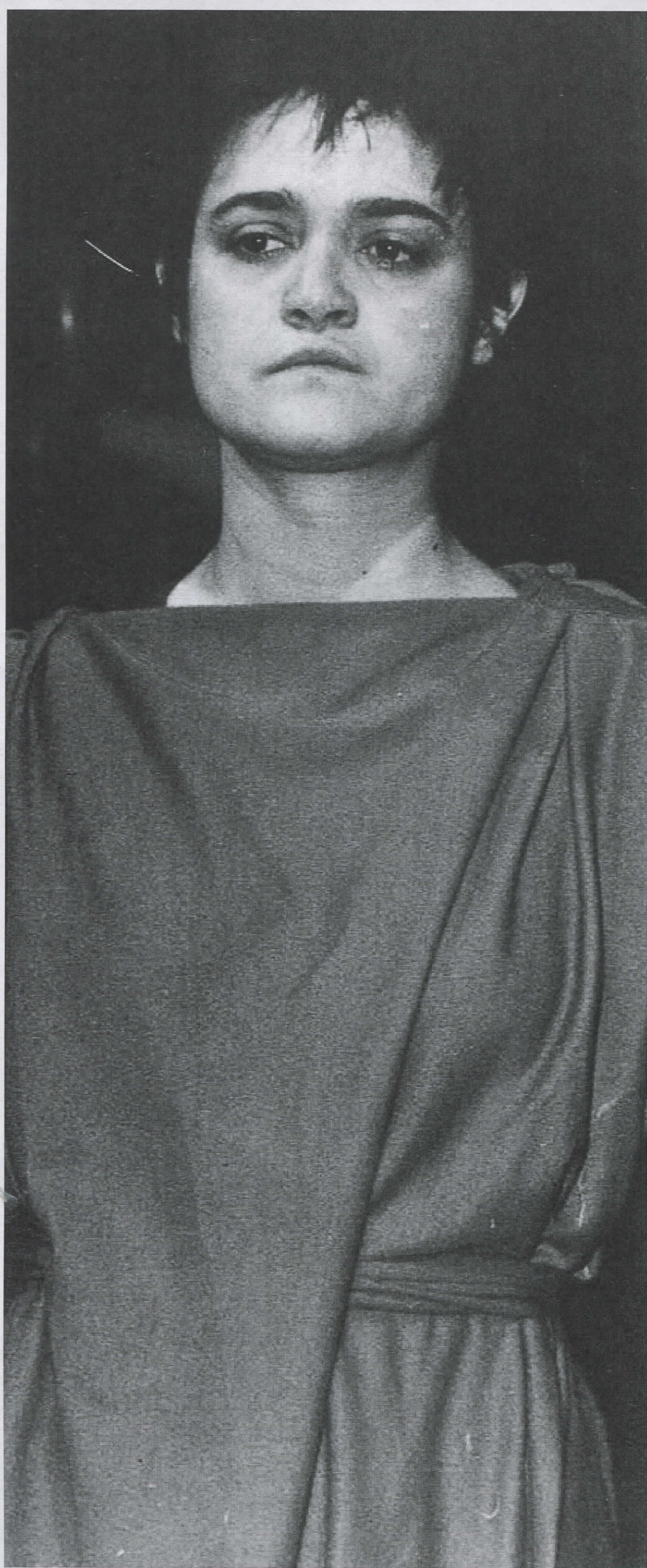
Sylvia Plath, mother of two children, wrote her long poem shortly before she killed herself; *Medea*, also mother of two, killed not herself but her sons in revenge for her abandonment by her husband.

Miss Plath, also abandoned, used her poetry for despair. Euripides, first advocate of the emancipation of women, directed his great swineine lines at man's frailty. Daryl Webster, Kate Versey and Susan Penhaligon show the sad poet's own conflicting reactions to childbirth with clarity and dignity.

The same simple approach is given to her *Medea* by Angelique Rockas. Small, dark, fiercely agile, she and her two chorus women with the old nurse dominate the stage. R.S.

Rosemary Say

ANGELIQUE
ROCKAS
AS
MEDEA.
THEATRO
TECHNIS



29.61.82

Theatro Technis

HAMB HIGH

THE company staging Euripides' MEDEA sees an uneasy parallel between exiled Medea and contemporary immigrants in this country striving to establish identity.

Director George Eugeniou decries the new Nationality Act, which prevents rela-

tives of those who have taken on mundane jobs in Britain from settling here, and he is aware of the failure to recognise that immigrants are different yet equal—a neglect culminating in civil chaos.

In the case of the Asiatic refugee Medea, whose husband Jason abandons her for a princess, vengeance exceeds vociferous unrest when she murders her royal rival and—in anguish—her children to prevent them being abused in an adopted country.

On the face of it, she has simply been misused in marriage. But being an exile exacerbates her situation and she is ruthlessly rejected.

Dynamically incensed, Angelique Rockas ably conveys Medea's despair at her husband's callous double-dealing, while complacent, pipe-smoking Jason, played by Brian Hoskin, persists in humiliating his wife with the convenience of common sense overriding his marriage vows.

The intensity of the plot might have palled, but events unfold fast and the cast conveys them with incisive insight. Expressive accompaniment is composed and performed by the Pula Arts Kommune. *LINDA TALBOT.*

Medea's revenge

Medea (Theatro Technis). MEDEA was the sorceress and "Woman of Colchis" who aided Jason to capture the Golden Fleece, became his wife and bore him two sons; he then deserted her for marriage into the royal family of Corinth. Euripides' play tells of the terrible revenge she took on him.

Besides being a wronged wife, she was also a persecuted alien—a "barbarian" subject to expulsion and the loss of her children. Her revenge includes the government official responsible—in this case, a king.

George Eugeniou's sensitive and eloquent production (although it probably did not cost as much as one of Jocelyn Herbert's costumes) is fit to stand beside the National's "Oresteia."

It is fascinating to compare these plays, remembering that there is less than 30 years between the proud patriotism and male self-confidence of the first and the horrific exposure of chauvinism and sexual oppression of the second. In little more than a generation Athenian civilisation was born, flourished, and died of its own contradictions.

TOM VAUGHAN

MORNING STAR

28/1/82

REVIEW OF ANGELIQUE ROCKAS AS MEDEA at THEATRO TECHNIS CAMDEN SCANNER 9th February.

In July 1974, the war in Cyprus drove 10,000 refugees to the UK. Their problem is still with us. The Home Office refuses to grant Cypriot refugees permission to remain in Britain until a fair solution to the Cyprus problem enables them to return to their occupied villages and towns.

It is against this background that the company has mounted a production of Euripides' 'Medea' the tragedy of the Asiatic refugee queen betrayed by her heroic, urbane husband, Jason, leader of the Argonauts. George Eugeniou, its director, sees in the dynamic force of this great tragic character a dramatic symbol of what the immigrant community offers its host country. Thus the programme notes tell us that, 'We have chosen 'Medea' because one of its central themes is foreign v. native.....the immigrants' presence cannot be ignored. They have brought with them a way of life enriched with a cultural heritage that has a history of centuries; they have brought to

their adopted country a new breath of life which is helping stir up the stagnant waters created by old-Imperialism and new-Conservatism'. They could not have chosen a better play to investigate this theme. Viewed in this light, Euripides' play of love and betrayal poses the question, 'What price human dignity?' in a world which measures human relations only in terms of the narrowest self-interest and the naked power which human beings have over each other. Euripides' plays are desperate arguments taking place in a daylight world of merciless clarity, where individuals are cut down to size, each trapped within his or her own predicament. The interventions of the Gods are at most precarious. Angelique Rockas in the



central part gives us a barefoot performance of great physical power, as a wife and mother and, above all, an intelligent woman contending on her own against two representative pillars of the community, a British naval officer Jason and a Home Office official King Creon. The well-spoken chorus is shocked, wise but impotent, leaving the audience to ponder deeply what is to be done, as we follow the ruthless tragic logic to its close. The speed of its logic leaves little time to take in the slides which hint at the wider modern implications of the play. This Brechtian technique fits in well enough, since Euripides too is concerned to interrogate the status of the individual drama. Yet this speed is the play's best Brechtian technique, since it showers us with new implications and facets demanding our constant critical attention. It is a rare, uncondescending theatrical experience.